

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL without prejudice or disclaimer claims 1-9 in the underlying PCT application, including any amendments under Article 19 or 34 and ADD new claims 10-20 in accordance with the following:

Claims 1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (New) A method for delivering messages in a communications network, comprising: monitoring an arrival rate of messages destined for a geographical area within a short time period;

establishing, upon reaching a threshold, a multicast group for routing the messages to the geographical area by joining to the multicast group network devices responsible for delivering the messages;

delivering, upon establishment of the multicast group, the messages to the geographical area.

11. (New) A method according to claim 10, further comprising delivering any further messages destined for the geographical area arriving after the establishment of the multicast group via the multicast group.

12. (New) A method according to claim 11, further comprising removing the multicast group after a predefined time period has elapsed within which no further messages destined for the geographical area arrive.

13. (New) A method according to claim 12, wherein each of the messages destined for the geographical area is defined by a geographical destination address.

14. (New) A method according to claim 13, wherein the geographical destination address of each of the messages destined for the geographical area is identical or substantially similar.

15. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein said monitoring of the rate of arrival is performed using a soft state message counter.

16. (New) A method according to claim 15, wherein said delivering uses fast internet protocol forwarding to forward the messages in the multicast group.

17. (New) A network device located in a communications network of network devices, comprising

means for monitoring an arrival rate of messages destined for a geographical area within a short time period;

means for establishing, upon reaching a threshold, a multicast group for routing the messages to the geographical area by joining to the multicast group the network devices responsible for delivering the messages;

means for delivering, upon establishment of the multicast group, the messages to the geographical area.

18. (New) A network device according to claim 8, wherein each network device is a router or a gateway.